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ABSTRACT

Examined were the educational attitudes, experiences, needs, and constraints of a selected sample of women in the Tuscaloosa area who were not enrolled in educational programs during the spring of 1975. A total of 116 women participated in the study and completed a 64-item questionnaire. The majority of the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward former informal and formal educational experiences. They also expressed a desire for continuing their education if special arrangements could be made. Most of those interviewed would consider enrolling in courses or areas of study because of personal interest and enjoyment, although they were also interested in earning credit toward a degree or certificate. Education was the most frequently indicated area of interest. The major barrier in attaining more education was home responsibilities. Other barriers included lack of time, inconvenient scheduling of classes, job responsibilities, cost, enrollment red tape, and inadequate or no child care. (Author/LBH)

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Studies Of The Adult Learner

Formal Education At A Standstill: Women's Views

by

Otis Holloway Owens

and

Marilyn Emplaincourt

Research Paper No. 4

The Institute of Higher Education Research and Services

The University of Alabama

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FOREWORD

Established in 1970, the Institute of Higher Education Research and Services (IHERS) is a tangible expression of The University of Alabama's commitment to upgrade the quality of higher education in Alabama, the South, and the Nation.

The development of human resources through training projects, the dissemination of pertinent studies and information for decision makers, and consultant services are among the Institute's several tasks.

Recently, however, with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, we have been able to give greater attention to our other significant task--research.

Inquiry into problems, issues, and trends in postsecondary education is a necessary and important work. The Institute is pleased that, as part of its continuing series of research into the nature and characteristics of the adult learner, it can present to a wide audience this helpful study of adult women as learners.

I am pleased to commend this important work of Otis Holloway Owens and Marilyn Emplaincourt to you.

Thomas Diener
Director, IHERS

PREFACE

Within the past ten years we have witnessed an increased interest in the adult student in postsecondary institutions. This interest has resulted from several notable trends both in our nation and in the whole spectrum of higher education. As the percentage of high school graduates going on to college slipped from 55% (1968) to 47% (1976), colleges and universities began to view the older students as "new clientele" (Martin & McCartney, 1976).

At a time when the role of women in the world society was enhanced through a deepening awareness of women in all areas of life, women, too, were viewed as new clientele for postsecondary education. Yet, in spite of the increased awareness, women are underrepresented in countless fields of employment and education. The reasons for this underrepresentation are diverse and relate to how both women and men perceive the roles women should play. Women, as new clientele, possess that great potential for contributing in significant measures to our world society.

The continuing education of women in the state of Alabama is but a part of the larger picture for higher education. In a recent address, Richard Thigpen (1976), Acting Chief Executive Officer of The University of Alabama, commented on the economic development of Alabama and the role of higher education. He cautioned, "There is no way to separate the future of the State from the future of education." To support his statement he called attention to a study conducted by the College of Commerce

and Business Administration at the Capstone which showed that business leaders in Alabama believed that slow economic growth in Alabama had been due in large part to a shortage of college graduates. Thigpen noted further that the same leaders had unanimously said, "Higher education is vitally important to the continued future economic development of the South."

The belief that higher education plays an important role in the economic development of Alabama was further borne out by a recent study of the opinions of Alabama citizens about higher education which revealed strong support for Alabama colleges and universities (Owings, 1976).

We say more specifically that the continuing education of women in the state of Alabama is crucial and even critical to the continued progress of this state. Thus it is important to address the issue of the underrepresentation of women in higher education. This study has sought to look at a select sample of women not currently enrolled in any learning experience at institutions of higher education.

Otis Holloway Owens
Marilyn Emplaincourt

The Institute of Higher Education
Research and Services

The University of Alabama
Summer, 1976

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Dr. Thomas J. Diener, Director of the Institute, gave continuous encouragement, assistance and direction to this project from its inception.

Mr. Donald Patterson worked diligently in the development of the questionnaire used in this study and served as co-investigator during the planning phase of the project. His insight and contributions were invaluable.

The study and this document were supported partially by a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to the Institute of Higher Education Research and Services. Their support is gratefully acknowledged. The Corporation should not be held responsible for the views expressed or conclusions reached in this document.

Data for this study could not have been obtained without the assistance of those women whose views are represented in this paper.

Acknowledged with thanks for special advice and assistance is Ms. Alice Jones, Divisional Administrative Assistant: Traditional Specialties, College of Community Health Sciences, The University of Alabama.

Thanks are also extended to Mary Lee Shannon, Linda Davidson, Gail Morgan and Barbara Royal, staff members of the Institute of Higher Education Research and Services, for their editorial and typing assistance, and to Dr. Albert E. Drake, Professor of Statistics, The University of Alabama, who provided computer processing of the data and statistical consulting assistance.

INTRODUCTION

During the past ten years, American institutions of postsecondary education have become increasingly aware of their failure to respond adequately to vast segments of the population. Occasionally, this failure has been due to intent; more often it has been due to actions based on limited knowledge and understanding of life situations, values, interests and aspirations of those who, unlike educational decision-makers, may not typically be white, male, middle-aged or career-oriented. Regardless of intent or causation, inequities do exist in postsecondary education based upon such factors as ethnic background, age, income and sex.

There are indications, however, that this situation may be changing. Colleges and universities throughout the nation are in the process of reassessing their purposes and examining programs, policies, and procedures which may have neglected to provide truly equal educational opportunities for selected groups.

The University of Alabama through its Institute of Higher Education Research and Services has completed a number of concurrent projects within the Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, area designed to assess the educational needs of adults of that area, especially the needs of groups which may have previously been neglected. This particular investigation, as part of a comprehensive study of adult and part-time students, has addressed a narrowly-defined sample of the population.

First, this investigation was concerned with adults, both as a constraint of the larger study and also as a characteristic of the post-secondary population.

Secondly, it was concerned with females because research indicates that massive sex-based inequality exists at all levels of higher education.

Thirdly, it was concerned with residents of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, not only as an accessible sample population, but also as the recipients of any long-term benefits which may result from this research.

Fourthly, and most importantly, it was concerned with those women who were not enrolled in postsecondary educational programs. These women have been largely ignored by researchers who have limited studies of the postsecondary educational needs of women, and the barriers they face, to samples of women who are already enrolled in educational programs. Since these groups of non-enrolled and enrolled women cannot be presumed to be alike, extensive investigation is needed in order to identify more completely the non-enrolled group and their educational needs.

This investigation has not presumed to answer all the educational questions regarding all of the women of Tuscaloosa County. At best this study has provided a broad view of the educational needs of a select sample of women residents in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area. Hopefully the data have been extensive enough to permit further, more detailed research.

Briefly, it attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the educational and occupational characteristics of the sample of non-enrolled women of Tuscaloosa County?

(2) Why are these women not enrolled in educational programs?

(3) Are there particular sub-groups of these women who exhibit

special reasons for non-enrollment?

(4) What kinds of programs will meet the needs of these women?

(5) Do these women need specialized programs?

Focus of the Study

This study is concerned with identifying the educational interests and needs of women in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area who were eighteen years old or older and not enrolled in any school or educational program at the time the data were collected.

The purpose of the study was two-fold: first, to provide information, as reported by a select sample of women, about why they were not enrolled in any educational program; and second, to identify the educational needs and interests of these women.

Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained primarily from a selected sample of women residents in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area who responded to a sixty-four (64) item questionnaire.

When this study was initiated it was realized that the identification of the sample would be one of the most difficult tasks of the project. Clubs and organizations with predominantly female membership were identified and compiled into a list. Another list consisting of churches in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area was compiled. A letter was written and mailed to an officer of each women's group and selected church groups. This letter requested that the leader identify three members of the organization who met the stated criteria (women 18 years old

or older and not enrolled in an educational program at the present time). Also included were an "Open Letter to Women of Tuscaloosa" attached to each questionnaire and an addressed, stamped envelope to be returned to the Institute of Higher Education Research and Services by the individual who completed the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty (120) completed questionnaires were returned. Four were discarded due to unclear markings leaving a total of 116 useable returns. Eighty-one percent of the respondents noted that they were members of a club, social organization, or were active in their community.

Limitations

This study has been limited first by the inaccessibility of the population and the lack of funds required to conduct a random survey of households. The survey reflects the responses of a selected sample of female adults and may not be truly representative of the population of non-enrolled female adults in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area.

Using the 1970 U. S. Census data, we have derived the figure of 4,550 which approximates the number of women 18 years old or older in the Tuscaloosa Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). It has been virtually impossible to determine how many of these were actually enrolled in an educational program at the time the data were collected. Caution must be exercised in generalizing from the findings of this study. This is especially true since respondents in this study were participants in organizations and church groups and thus represent a highly selective group.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age

Thirty-two or 27.6% of the respondents were between 18 and 30 years of age. Over one-third (37.1%) of the women were between 31 and 45 years of age. Thirty-four percent (34.5%) were 46 years old and older (Table 1).

Marital Status

Given the ages of the sample population and the fact that the median age at first marriage for women is approximately 20.8 years, it is not surprising that the largest percentage (80.2%) of the respondents were married and living with their husbands. The other respondents were either single and never married (9.5%), widowed (6.9%), divorced (1.7%), or separated (.9%). One person failed to respond to the question for unexplained reasons (.9%; Table 2). In another question, those persons who were not married were asked to indicate whether they wanted to be married in the future. Since 24.1% of the sample replied to the question, it is clear that some of the women who were already married misinterpreted the question and responded to it. It is still possible, however, to suppose that a majority of the unmarried women want to be married within the next five years. Six percent of the women indicated uncertainty about their future marital plans. When the women were asked to project their plans for marriage to ten and twenty years, 87.1% failed to respond to the question. Thus, any analysis would be limited to pure conjecture (Table 3).

Race

The racial composition of the sample population (Black, 21.6%; White, 70.7%) approximated the percentages of women, black (23.3%)

and white (77.4%), eighteen years and older as reported in the U.S. Census of Population, Alabama (1970). Unfortunately, 7.8% did not respond to the item on race (Table 4).

Research has shown that as a group black women are more apt than white women to encounter the constraints imposed by low income, low social status, and inferior elementary and secondary education. Moreover, where income level, social status, and schooling are comparable between the two groups, research has also shown that the educational aspirations of black women tend to be higher than those of white women and less constricted by cultural stereotypes of feminine roles (Epstein, 1973). Use of chi square analysis on the responses of the non-enrolled women in the Tuscaloosa area, however, revealed no significant differences between the way black and white women responded to any item.

Children

When the women in the sample were asked to indicate the number of children in their immediate family, 22.4% failed to respond. The failures seem due, in this case, to lack of clarity in the questionnaire. Of the 77.6% who did respond, about one-fourth (22.4%) had no children, 17.2% had only one child; 22.4% had two; 8.6% had three; and 6.9% had four or more children (Table 5).

Presence of children in the family has been shown as an important determinant in women's decisions to continue their education (Hembrough, 1966). Accordingly, children figure among the seven most important reasons women in the sample gave for not enrolling in educational programs at the present time (Table 33).

In an effort to determine whether the respondents' situations with regard to domestic responsibilities would be altered within five, ten, or twenty years, they were asked to indicate if they plan to have dependent children at a given time in the future. Single persons may well have omitted the question, considering it to be inappropriate due to their marital status. This was not the only reason for failure to answer this question, however. Single women comprised only 18% of the sample, but 33.6% failed to make projections for the next five years.

Projections of this nature seem to have posed a real problem to the women in the sample. Almost thirty percent (29.3%) indicated that they planned to have dependent children in the next five years, but even more (33.6%) failed to answer the question. A little more than eighteen percent (18.1%) expected to have dependent children in the next 10 years, but 48.3% did not answer. Four women (3.4%) could foresee having dependent children twenty years from the date they answered the questionnaire. A full 50% were unable or did not wish to make projections for twenty years into the future (Table 6).

Siblings

The question relating to the number of siblings in the respondent's family was answered by every woman in the sample. Six percent (6%) of the respondents indicated that they were an only child. Those respondents who had one sibling represented 13.8%. Another 16.4% had two siblings. Nearly half (42.2%) of the sample came from families with three or more siblings (Table 7).

EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Present Employment

In order to determine reasons why a woman is not enrolled in educational programs, it is important to know what obligations are made upon her time and resources. In a preceding section it was noted that at least 53.2% of the respondents had children. While domestic responsibilities occupy an important amount of a woman's time and energy, they are not the only demands made upon the contemporary woman. Many are occupied outside the home. When asked to indicate their occupation, 53.6% of the women in the sample listed white-collar occupations, 39% listed housewife, 3.4% indicated that they were either retired or unemployed, 2.7% listed blue-collar occupations and two percent failed to respond to the item (Table 8).

On the basis of the responses, it was expected that at least 56.7% or 65 women would indicate in the next question whether they were employed part-time or full-time. However, 58.7% or 68 women responded to the item. Forty-four percent (44%) indicated that their employment was full-time while 14.7% indicated that their employment was part-time. The increase in the number of women responding to the second question may be explained by the fact that some housewives responded to the item in spite of being asked to omit it.

A similar discrepancy arises in the responses of unemployed or retired women. About three percent (3.4%) indicated that they were either unemployed or retired in the first question while 12% marked the unemployed or retired categories in the second question (Table 9). No explanation, other than misunderstanding of the items, can be offered for this variation.

Another question relating to employment showed that over half of the women (51.7%) worked outside the home. Some 7.8% worked in their homes and 4.3% worked both within and outside the home (Table 10).

Projected Occupational Plans

In an effort to determine possible changes in occupational status of the sample population, the women were asked several questions requiring projectional judgments. A desire for a change in status can be noted for 7.8% of the sample who were currently seeking employment (Table 11). When asked if they were interested in changing their field of employment (e.g., from x-ray technician to insurance sales person; from teacher to social worker; or from housewife only to housewife and bank teller), 67.2% responded no, 19.0% responded yes, 8.6% were undecided and 5.2% did not respond (Table 12).

The percentages were comparable for those interested in changing the level of their employment (e.g., from bank teller to bank manager, from maintenance person to maintenance foreman, or from business secretary to business executive). Sixteen percent (16%) said yes, they were interested in changing levels. Sixty percent (60.3%) stated no, they were not interested; and 17.2% did not answer (Table 12).

With time, fewer and fewer women expected to be employed. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the sample expected to be employed five years from now as opposed to the more than 50% presently employed. Thirty percent (30.2%) expected to be employed ten years in the future and only 19% of the sample anticipated employment twenty years in the future. As with earlier projections about marriage and dependent children, many in the sample were unable or unwilling to make projections about employment (Table 13).

Contribution to Family Income

Another important consideration regarding the employment circumstances of women is the amount of money they actually contribute to the family income. It would seem that the more they contribute, the greater is the necessity that they continue to work.

By extension, the woman who is required to work in order to aid in the financial support of her family is additionally limited in the time, money, and energy that she has available for education. Most of the women in the sample (58.6%) contributed to the family income through their employment. Almost one-tenth (9.5%) indicated that they earned all of the family income. It will be remembered that some 9.5% of the women were also single and never married and in such case they would logically earn all the family income. Another 4.3% earned most of it, 13.8% earned about half of it and 31% earned some of it. Those who listed their occupation as housewife (39%) were asked to omit this question. The "no answer" and "no contribution" responses together approximate the percentage of housewives in the sample (Table 14).

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Educational Experiences, Attitudes, and Plans

Some formal education had been received by 96.6% of the respondents; 2.6% indicated that they had not received any formal education (Table 15). A small percentage of the respondents (6.9%) were not high school graduates; 16.4% had only a high school diploma or equivalent. Another 5.2% had some vocational or technical training while 21.6% had some college work but no degree. Three percent (2.6%) stated that they had a two year college degree and 22.4% had a bachelors degree or equivalent. A fifth (20.7%) indicated that they had a masters degree while only 3.4% had earned a professional or terminal degree (Table 16). In spite of the relatively advanced level of education of most of the respondents, more than half (57.8%) were not satisfied with the amount of formal education they had received (Table 17).

By the same token, 77.6% of the respondents were not satisfied with the amount of their informal education (Table 17). Over 85 percent (85.3%) had attended informal educational activities such as swimming lessons, gardening clinics and lectures. Only 14.7% had not attended any informal educational activities (Table 18).

Given the respondents lack of satisfaction with the amount of both their formal and informal education it follows logically that the majority (85.3%) expressed an interest in continuing their education formally or informally. Of these, more than half (51.7%) were interested in continuing their education immediately; 33.6% were interested in continuing their education in the future, but did not wish to do so im-

mediately (Table 19). Moreover, only 10.3% of the respondents were enrolled in any type of learning experience at the time the questionnaire was distributed. None of the respondents, however, were enrolled in a formal degree or certificate program as non-enrollment was one of the criteria for selection of the sample (Table 20).

Accordingly, it had been two to five years since about one fourth of the respondents (23.3%) had been enrolled in a formal educational program. Almost as many had not been enrolled from 11 to 20 years and 12.9% had completed their formal educational programs from six to ten years ago. For only 16.4% it had been less than two years since they were last enrolled. Another 20.7% had not been enrolled for twenty years or more (Table 21).

Most (56%) felt that while they enjoyed the experiences of their formal education, they could have been better. Another 36.2% thoroughly enjoyed all of their educational experiences. A few (6.0%) said there were good and bad times. None indicated they did not like school very much or that education was a total waste of time (Table 22).

More than half (58.6%) had met with a counselor or advisor to discuss educational or career plans; 46 respondents (39.7%) had not talked with school personnel (Table 23). Their experiences with counselors were very good (16.4%), good (14.7%), satisfactory (19.0%) and bad (7.8%). While none described their experiences as very bad, 49 women (42.2%) did not respond to this item (Table 24). The lack of response can partly be explained by the fact that those women (39.7%) who had not had contact with a counselor were requested to omit the item.

In another question respondents were asked to indicate the various reasons they had for leaving their last educational institution. Graduation was cited by most women (52.6%) as one of the reasons. Less than 10% of the sample chose any one of the following reasons to explain their leaving school: lack of interest, change in career plans, children or pregnancy, change in educational program, academic difficulties, personal problems, financial problems, and disciplinary problems (Table 25).

In the opinion of most of the respondents, their last school had prepared them at least satisfactorily for further education. Almost one-third (30.2%) indicated they had been very well prepared, 31.9% had been well prepared, and 33.6% viewed their preparation as satisfactory. Only 3.4% thought they had been poorly prepared and none noted that they had been very poorly prepared (Table 26). Moreover, in another question, 67.2% of the respondents expressed the opinion that the colleges and universities in Alabama are doing a good job (Table 27).

In a related question, persons in the sample were asked to evaluate their preparation for further education at the present time. In comparing the data from Tables 26 and 28, it can be seen that while 30.2% indicated they had been very well prepared by their last school to continue their education, only 22.4% felt that they were very well prepared to continue their education at the present time. Another 35.3% said that they were well prepared and 32.8% considered their current preparation satisfactory. About ten percent (8.7%) viewed their

current preparation as poor or very poor (Table 28). The lapse of time between the respondents' enrollment in their last school and the present may explain the difference in the figures. For more than seventy-five percent (78.5%) of the respondents it had been more than two years since they were enrolled in an educational institution (Table 21).

Considerations and Reasons for Continuing Education

A very important consideration in the undertaking of this study was to determine the reasons why non-enrolled women in the Tuscaloosa area would consider continuing their education. Accordingly, they were given an opportunity to indicate the various factors which would positively affect a decision to enroll in any educational program. Most respondents (78.4%) would enroll in an educational program because of personal interest or enjoyment. Lesser percentages of women chose the following reasons: to help others (57.8%); to gain a skill (56%); to meet new people (49.1%); to earn a degree or certificate (44%); to increase earning power (43.1%); to get away from routine living (23.3%); to gain a promotion (19%); and to change careers or to help get a new job (16.4%; Table 29).

It is interesting to note that while more than 75% of the respondents indicated that they would enroll in education programs for personal interest or enjoyment, only one fourth (25%) were not interested in receiving some type of degree or certificate for learning. In fact, almost three quarters (70.8%) expressed desire for credit leading to a formal degree or certificate. Of the various degrees possible, 19% of the respondents desired credit toward an advanced degree (i.e., M.A., Ph.D.), 13.8% preferred credit toward a four-year college degree

(i.e., B.A., B.S.), 7.8% wanted credit toward a skill certificate or license, 5.2% of the respondents desired credit toward a two-year college degree (i.e., A.A.) and 1.7% desired credit toward a high school diploma. Another 23.3% expressed desire for a certificate recognizing satisfactory completion of a course or program (Table 30).

This desire of almost half of the respondents for degrees issued from formal educational programs suggests a traditional orientation on the part of these women with regard to education. The traditional nature of their views toward educational experiences appeared again in their responses to questions concerning preferred types of instruction, preferred places of instruction, and preferred courses or areas of instruction.

To indicate preferred areas of instruction, the respondents designated a total of thirty-nine courses and areas of study according to first, second, and third choice. With the exception of auto mechanics and mortuary science, all courses and areas of study were categorized into two broad areas: (1) personal development and home improvements and (2) academic programs.

The following courses fall within the first category: sewing, decorating, cooking, arts and crafts, gardening, needlework, and landscaping. The second category consists of courses that are primarily academic in nature including English, nursing, secretarial science, science, home economics, guidance, communications and writing, history, music, education, psychology, economics, languages, geneology, law, real estate, bookkeeping, religion and public relations.

Education, as a study area, was selected by the largest percentage

of respondents as a first (35.3%), second (18.1%) and third (15.5%) choice (Table 31). This finding is not surprising since 28.4% of the sample indicated that their occupation was teaching.

No other area or courses were chosen by ten percent or more of the respondents. It appears that the interests of this sample are diverse with a cluster of respondents in the area of education.

The field of education has been traditionally an area of great participation by women. In choosing it as the preferred study area, the non-enrolled women in this sample show their interests to be very similar to those of women who have enrolled and continue to enroll in postsecondary educational programs.

In view of the fact that there are many ways for people to learn, the respondents were requested to note which type of instruction would best suit them for learning in their major area of interest. Lectures or classes were chosen by 42.2%; short-term conferences, institutes or workshops were selected by 24.1%; on-the-job training or an internship was indicated by 12.9% (Table 32).

Persons in this study also preferred the following traditional places for studying or learning: graduate or professional school, 21.6%; technical institute, vocational, trade or business college, 7.8% and four-year college or university, 37.1% (Table 33). The reasons most respondents gave for their preference were convenient location (52.9%) and available facilities (25%; Table 34).

Once the sample had answered questions concerning type of course or program, type of instruction and places for instruction, they were asked to express preferences with regard to frequency, length, time

of class attendance, cost, and instructors' qualifications. The answers to these questions revealed a desire and need for more non-traditional types of educational programs.

In order to learn in their chosen area of study, 65.5% were willing to attend classes once or twice a week and 20.7% were willing to attend more than twice a week. On the average, 60.3% would be willing to spend three to ten hours per week in class and 19.7% would spend more than ten hours per week. About an equal number of respondents considered mornings (37.1%) and evenings (35.3%) to be their most convenient time to attend classes (Table 35).

Only about one-fourth (24.1%) of the sample indicated that they would want to continue their study for a period of time limited to one month to six weeks. On the other hand, 64.6% of the respondents were willing to continue study at least six months and 37% were willing to continue study even longer (Table 35).

Over forty-seven percent (47.4%) would be willing to pay between $10 and $50 for a course or activity. Another 16.4% were willing to pay $50 to $100 and 22.4% were willing to pay more than $100 (Table 35).

When asked to designate the qualifications of the person preferred to direct learning activities, 69% of the sample showed a preference for the experienced rather than the formally educated individual. Only one-fourth (25.8%) of the respondents preferred the director of their learning activities to hold a B.S., B.A., M.A., or professional degree (Table 36).

Perceived Barriers

Certainly one of the most important purposes of this study is to reveal reasons why non-enrolled women in the Tuscaloosa area are not continuing their education. For the potential student these reasons can become more than just minor inconveniences; they can prevent participation.

Before having the women mark all the obstacles which would limit their participation in educational activities, they were simply asked if there were reasons other than their own free choice affecting their interest in continuing education. Forty-five women or 38.8% of the sample replied yes, 56.1% replied no, 3.4% were uncertain and 1.7% failed to respond (Table 37).

Those who responded affirmatively were then asked to list the three most influential reasons affecting their interest. Accordingly, 33.6% of the respondents gave a variety of determining factors. Almost a third of those who wrote in a factor (12.9% of the total sample) listed cost. Over a fourth (28%) of the respondents to the item or 9.5% of the total sample listed time as a barrier (Table 38). Cost and lack of time also figure prominently in the responses given to a second question related to educational deterrents.

The second question differed from the first in that a list of obstacles which had been compiled from readings were presented to all respondents. The women were requested to check all obstacles they felt would negatively affect their chances of continuing their education if they were otherwise interested in doing so. In this

instance 44% of the respondents indicated home responsibilities. The second most frequently indicated reason was not enough time (37.1%). Ranking third, fourth, and fifth in frequency were "courses I want aren't scheduled when I can attend" (26.7%), "job responsibilities" (25%) and "cost" (22.4%). One fifth (20.7%) of the sample indicated enrollment red tape and 19% marked inadequate or no child care as limiting factors. These and other potential barriers are rank ordered in Table 39.

Comparison of the data in Table 38 and Table 39 raises at least one important question. Home responsibilities was marked more frequently than cost and time in the second question. However, home responsibilities was not written in for the first of the two questions. Why? One explanation comes from the possibility that women checking home responsibilities in the second question simply did not respond to the first question. Another possibility is that the women in the sample may have failed to think of home responsibilities until they were provided an opportunity to consider them specifically as a deterrent.

In any event, by far the majority (85.3%) of the women in this sample expressed an interest in continuing their education if barriers could be removed or if special arrangements could be made (Table 19). In addition to the steps that can be taken by educational institutions, the efforts of the family unit and friends can play an important role in removing barriers and obstacles from the path of a woman desirous of continuing her education. Frequently in a family situation special arrangements can only be made if other members of the family are willing to cooperate with the prospective student and to assist with domestic

responsibilities, expenses, and transportation. Cooperation in these areas would ideally reflect an equally important supportive and encouraging attitude toward the woman who may be student, mother, wife, and employee.

Various studies substantiate the notion that a strong support system is one of the antecedent conditions for women to participate in a continuing educational experience (Feldman, 1969). The women in this sample also reflect a need for encouragement and support. According to 65.5% of the women, husbands would be important in helping them to reach a decision if they were considering continuing their education. Eighteen percent of the respondents were unmarried; thus this figure is even more impressive than it would be if all the respondents were married. Given the need of a husband's aid in reaching a decision, perhaps it is understandable why some of the women were not enrolled. Only 25% of the respondents stated that their husbands had encouraged them to enroll or apply within the past few years (Table 40).

Because of the importance of husbands in the decision making process a few items were included in the questionnaire to provide a basic profile of the respondents' spouses.

Over half (58.7%) of the respondents' spouses were employed in white-collar occupations. Twenty percent (20.7%) of the respondents classified their husbands in clerical/sales and 19% classified their husbands as managers/administrators. Sixteen percent (16.7%) of the sample were married to men with blue-collar jobs. The most frequently indicated occupation in the blue-collar category was laborer (5.2%; Table 41).

In terms of education it was reported that 46.6% of the husbands had received some college training. More than thirteen percent (13.8%) had

husbands with a master's degree and 4.3% were married to men with eight years of education or less (Table 42). On the basis of a study entitled "Why Do Mature Women Return to College?" Doty (1966) suggests that "the environment provided by a college-educated husband stimulates a woman's educational aspirations." Accordingly it can be hypothesized that the women in this sample whose husbands have some college training will be more likely than women with less educated husbands to eventually enroll in educational programs.

Other individuals including friends, children, parents, and co-workers may figure in a woman's decision to enroll in educational programs either by verbal and practical encouragement or by serving as models. While only 7.8% of the respondents viewed their friends as important in helping them make a decision with regard to their education, 30.2% had been encouraged by friends to enroll or apply during the past two years. Furthermore, 69% of the respondents had friends who had enrolled in or applied to educational programs and 63.8% noted that these friends were female. More respondents indicated receiving encouragement from female rather than from male persons. For example, 12.1% of the respondents indicated that they had been encouraged by their parents and 12.1% also indicated that the parent designated was female. Similarly, 31% of the respondents stated that they knew co-workers who had enrolled in or applied to educational programs within the past two years and 28.4% noted that these persons were female (Table 40).

In spite of the predominance of female encouragement, most respondents felt that they would receive encouragement from all persons with whom they have relationships. Most respondents (70.7%) expected

encouragement from friends while a little over half (57.8%) expected encouragement from their husbands. Only six women (5.2%) expected discouragement from their children and 22.4% expected their parents to neither encourage nor discourage (Table 43).

In order to receive a final indication of the respondents' interest in continuing their education, the members of the sample were requested to identify any actions they had taken within the past year relative to continuing their education. The largest percentage (56.9%) had discussed education. A smaller percentage (48.3%) indicated that they had read materials about educational programs for their own use. Only a small percentage (7.8%), however, indicated that they had actually applied to an educational program and another 9.5% had been admitted (Table 44).

Obviously, it is of great importance to educational programs and institutions to be able to reach and serve those persons who wish to continue their education. Steps must be taken to alleviate the discrepancy between those who consider and discuss prospective educational programs (56.9% in the case of this sample) and those who are actually admitted (9.5%). The descriptive data presented to this point provide a basis upon which certain suggestions and implications can be founded, at least for the women represented in this study.

COMMENTARY

This study has sought to provide specific information about a small and select segment of women in the Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, area. Thus, any inferences and/or recommendations made from this data must be made cautiously and with this fact in mind. The most important implication of this study is the need for additional research. This is particularly true in view of the fact that women represent one of the fastest growing groups of postsecondary students in the United States. We know some things about women who attend colleges and universities, but we know very little about those who do not attend. In this study of women who were not enrolled in college, a large proportion (40.6%) had a high school diploma but no bachelors degree. Interestingly, about three fourths of this sample were interested in the pursuit of a degree (bachelors, masters, or doctorate). Thus, offerings for this group should include both graduate and undergraduate courses. The consideration of money is one of the real barriers women face in continuing their learning experiences formally and informally. The financial implications can be especially imposing for women who contribute all or a significant amount of money to the family income. The fact that there are limited funds for financial aid to part-time students has further complicated the access of women to postsecondary education.

This study revealed that the conditions which these women prefer for continuing their learning were diverse. That the women in this study tended to select a traditional mode of study and instruction

may be due in part to their positive attitudes toward previous educational experiences. On the other hand, these women may be generally unaware of non-traditional modes of study.

The respondents were equally divided between the preference for morning and evening classes. This finding is consistent with a study based on a random sample of adults in the greater Tuscaloosa area (Owings and Diener, 1975). Since most universities schedule heavily in the morning, meeting this preference would involve no changes in scheduling. There is a need for careful study of late afternoon and evening classes desired by these and other potential students.

Since nearly all of the respondents had children, some attention should be given to the need for child care. One of the difficulties in providing child care has been in providing good care on a financially sound basis that is either low cost or no cost. Further, parents tend to differ on how they wish a child to be cared for during their absence. For example, some parents feel strongly that their child(ren) should remain in the familiar environment of their own homes with a responsible adult; other parents consider group care facilities adequate, but only during certain periods of the day. It seems unlikely that child care services will be provided for children of varying ages for extended day and evening schedules. The solution to the child care problem may be found in providing a child care allowance to mothers returning to school. The responsibility of finding a suitable sitter would be left to the mother.

Most frequently cited as a deterrent to continuing education was home responsibilities. Since it is not likely that home responsibilities

will change for the majority, there is a strong implication that these women need to find effective methods for coping with the demands of home and school. That most of the women in this study indicated education most often as a desired area of study demonstrates a need for the dissemination of career and job information. Women have traditionally chosen education as an area of study. Consequently, women in the field have served as models, thus influencing the careers of other women who become educators.

While analyzing the data, it became clear that despite the design and intent of the questionnaire, the women in the sample had particular difficulty in responding to three items which called for projections concerning marriage, children, and employment. That large percentages of the participants failed to respond to these items suggests that they may lack long-range plans for directing their lives. Indeed, if these women have not consciously and conscientiously formulated even the most generalized plans with regard to major influential factors in their lives, they may need assistance in decision making, goal-orientation, self-evaluation, and human potential activities.

While this study has answered some questions about the needs of a selected sample of women in the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, area, we have left other questions unexamined and unanswered. Some of the unexamined questions are:

1. What are the characteristics of those who preferred evening as compared with those preferring morning classes?
2. How do the responses of mothers of pre-school children differ from other members of the sample?
3. What are the attitudes of husbands and how can they support their wives to continue their education? How do husbands perceive their role in encouraging their wives to continue an educational experience?

4. How can these women gain knowledge about educational resources and alternatives?

5. How are the respondents in this sample alike or different from other non-enrolled women?

There is clearly a need to examine these and other questions if we expect to learn more about women who have interrupted their educational experiences.

The perplexities caused by home responsibilities, lack of time, inconvenient scheduling of classes, job responsibilities, cost, enrollment red tape and inadequate or no child care, weave an intricate web which causes the formal education of women to stand still. Thus, it is not surprising that the recent gains in educational opportunities have benefited a limited number of women. A greater number of women may be able to continue their formal education if institutions of higher education consider and act according to the realities of the life experiences of women when developing programs for the adult student.

Table 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE

Age	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
18-30	32	27.6
31-45	43	37.1
46 and Over	40	34.5
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 2

MARITAL STATUS OF SAMPLE

Status	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Single	11	9.5
Married	93	80.2
Widowed	8	6.9
Separated	1	.9
Divorced	2	1.7
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 3

PROJECTIONS FOR MARRIAGE FIVE, TEN AND TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW

Years	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Five		
Yes	17	14.7
No	4	3.4
Don't Know	7	6.0
No Answer	88	75.9
	116	100.0
Ten		
Yes	8	6.9
No	3	2.6
Don't Know	4	3.4
No Answer	101	87.1
	116	100.0
Twenty		
Yes	8	6.9
No	3	2.6
Don't Know	4	3.4
No Answer	101	87.1
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 4

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

Race	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
White	82	70.7
Black	25	21.6
Other	0	0
No Answer	9	7.8
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 5

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Number	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
None	26	22.4
One	20	17.2
Two	26	22.4
Three	10	8.6
Four	5	4.3
Five or More	3	2.6
No Answer	26	22.4
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 6

PROJECTIONS FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Years	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Five		
Yes	34	29.3
No	41	35.3
Don't Know	2	1.7
No Answer	39	33.6
	116	100.0
Ten		
Yes	21	18.1
No	36	31.0
Don't Know	3	2.6
No Answer	56	48.3
	116	100.0
Twenty		
Yes	4	3.4
No	50	43.1
Don't Know	4	3.4
No Answer	58	50.0
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 7

SIBLINGS OF THE SAMPLE

Number	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
None	7	6.0
One	16	13.8
Two	19	16.4
Three or More	49	42.2
No Answer	25	21.6
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 8

OCCUPATIONS OF THE SAMPLE

Occupations	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
Blue-Collar Occupations		
Food Service Worker	1	.9
Maid	1	.9
Needlework Finisher	1	.9
White-Collar Occupations		
Clerk, Telephone Operator	9	7.8
Librarian, Library Aids	3	2.6
Nurse, Nurse Aide	3	2.6
Medical Assistant	1	.9
Principal, Teacher	33	28.4
Secretary	9	7.8
Social Worker	3	2.6
Staff Assistant	1	.9
Other		
Housewife	45	38.8
Retired/Unemployed	4	3.4
No Answer	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 9

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE SAMPLE

Status	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Full Time	51	44.0
Part Time	17	14.7
Unemployed	7	6.0
Retired	7	6.0
Other	0	0
No Answer	34	29.3
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 10

PRINCIPLE LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Location	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Within the home	9	7.8
Outside the home	60	51.7
Both places about equally	5	4.3
No answer	42	36.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 11

RESPONDENTS CURRENTLY SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	9	7.8
No	94	81.0
Undecided	12	10.3
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 12

INTEREST IN EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

Change	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT (For example, from x-ray technician to insurance sales person; from teacher to social worker)		
Yes	22	19.0
No	78	67.2
Don't Know	10	8.6
No Answer	6	5.2
TOTAL	116	100.0
LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT (For example, from bank teller to bank manager; from maintenance person to maintenance supervisor; from business secretary to business executive)		
Yes	19	16.4
No	70	60.3
Don't Know	7	6.0
No Answer	20	17.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 13

PROJECTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT
FIVE, TEN AND TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW

Years	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
FIVE		
Yes	55	47.4
No	26	22.4
Don't Know	18	15.5
No Answer	17	14.7
TOTAL	116	100.0
TEN		
Yes	35	30.2
No	16	13.8
Don't Know	13	11.2
No Answer	52	44.8
TOTAL	116	100.0
TWENTY		
Yes	22	19.0
No	28	24.1
Don't Know	13	11.2
No Answer	53	45.7
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 14

PROPORTION OF FAMILY INCOME
EARNED BY RESPONDENTS

Amount	Absoulute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
All of it	11	9.5
Most of it	5	4.3
About half of it	16	13.8
Some of it	36	31.0
None of it	20	17.2
No Answer	28	24.1
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 15

FORMAL EDUCATION OF THE SAMPLE

Elementary School or Above	Absoulute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	112	96.6
No	3	2.6
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.4

Table 16

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE SAMPLE

Educational Attainment	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
0-8 years	2	1.7
9-12 years	6	5.2
High School or G.E.D.	19	16.4
Vocational Technical	6	5.2
Some College	25	21.6
Two Year College Degree	3	2.6
Bachelors Degree	26	22.4
Masters Degree	24	20.7
Terminal Degree	4	3.4
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 1?

SATISFACTION WITH AMOUNT OF EDUCATION
IN TWO AREAS

Areas	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Formal Education		
Yes	39	33.6
No	67	57.8
Don't Know	9	7.8
No Answer	1	.9
	116	100.0
Informal Education		
Yes	21	18.1
No	90	77.6
Don't Know	4	3.4
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 18

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE
WHO HAD EVER ATTENDED INFORMAL CLASSES

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	99	85.3
No	17	14.7
No Answer	0	0
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 19

INTEREST AND WHEN THE SAMPLE WOULD CONSIDER CONTINUING EDUCATION IF BARRIERS COULD BE CHANGED OR IF SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE

Interest and When	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes, Now	60	51.7
Yes, in the Future, But Not Now	39	33.6
No, Not Now or in the Future	3	2.6
Don't Know	10	8.6
No Answer	4	3.4
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 20

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE
ENROLLED IN ANY LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	12	10.3
No	98	84.5
No Answer	6	5.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 21

LENGTH OF TIME SINCE LAST ENROLLED
IN A FORMAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Length of Time	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Less Than Two Years	19	16.4
Two - Five Years	27	23.3
Six - Ten Years	15	12.9
Eleven - Twenty Years	25	21.6
More Than Twenty Years	24	20.7
No Answer	6	5.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 22

ATTITUDES TOWARD FORMER FORMAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Attitudes	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
I thoroughly enjoyed all of my educational experiences	42	36.2
Although I enjoyed most of my education, I suppose it could have been better in some ways	65	56.0
There were good times and bad times - I guess it was all right	7	6.0
I didn't like school very much, but I guess it was necessary	0	0
Education was a total waste of my time	0	0
No Answer	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 23

CONTACT WITH A COUNSELOR ABOUT CAREER PLANS

Contact	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	68	58.6
No	46	39.7
No Answer	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 24

A DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCES WITH COUNSELORS

Description	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Very Good	19	16.4
Good	17	14.7
Satisfactory	22	19.0
Bad	9	7.8
Very Bad	0	0
No Answer	49	42.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 25

REASONS GIVEN BY SAMPLE
FOR LEAVING LAST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Reasons	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Graduation	61	52.6
Marriage	21	18.1
Financial problems	11	9.5
Children or pregnancy	10	8.6
Other	9	7.8
Change in Career Plans	7	6.0
Lack of Interest	5	4.3
Academic difficulties	4	3.4
Personal problems	3	2.6
Change in Choice of Educational Program	2	1.7
Disciplinary Problems	0	0

Table 26

ASSESSMENT OF PREPARATION AT LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED

Assement	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Very Well	35	30.2
Well	37	31.9
Satisfactorily	39	33.6
Poorly	4	3.4
Very Poorly	0	0
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 27

ASSESSMENT OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN ALABAMA

Opinion	Relative Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (Percent)
Are Colleges and Universities in Alabama doing a good job?		
Yes	78	67.2
No	6	5.2
Don't Know	30	25.9
No Answer	2	1.7

Table 28

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PREPARATION
FOR CONTINUED EDUCATION

Assessment	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Very Well	26	22.4
Well	41	35.3
Satisfactorily	38	32.8
Poorly	9	7.8
Very Poorly	1	.9
No Answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 29

REASONS FOR ENROLLING
IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Reason	Abeolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
For Personal Interest or Enjoyment	91	78.4
To Help Others	67	57.8
To Gain a Skill or Profession	65	56.0
To Meet New People	57	49.1
To Earn a Degree or Certificate	51	44.0
To Increase your Earning Power	50	43.1
To Get Away From Routine Living	27	23.3
To Gain a Promotion or Advancement	22	19.0
To Change Careers or to Help Get a New Job	19	16.4

Table 30

DEGREE AND/OR CREDIT DESIRED FOR LEARNING

Degree and/or Credit	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
No degree or Certificate	29	25.0
Certificate of satisfactory completion	27	23.3
Credit toward a high school diploma	2	1.7
Credit toward skill certificate or license	9	7.8
Credit toward a two-year college degree (AA)	6	5.2
Credit toward a four-year college degree (BA)	16	13.8
Credit toward an advanced degree (MA,Ph.D)	22	19.0
Other	2	1.7
No Answer	3	2.6
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 31

COURSES AND AREAS OF STUDY DESIRED

Courses	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Personal and Home Improvement Courses						
Decorating	7	6.0	7	6.0	4	3.4
Arts and Crafts	6	5.2	4	3.4	7	6.0
Sewing	4	3.4	10	8.6	2	1.7
Landscaping	2	1.7	1	.9	-	-
Needlework	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	.9
Cooking	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	.9
Gardening	1	.9	3	2.6	3	2.6
Academic Courses and Areas						
Education	41	35.3	21	18.1	18	15.5
English	8	6.9	3	2.6	1	.9
Nursing	5	4.3	3	2.6	2	1.7
Library Science	4	3.4	2	1.7	-	-
History	4	3.4	7	6.0	5	4.3
Guidance	3	2.6	4	3.4	-	-
Secretary	3	2.6	3	2.6	4	3.4
Psychology	3	2.6	3	2.6	1	.9
Home Economics	3	2.6	4	3.4	3	2.6
Science	2	1.7	1	.9	2	1.7
Religion	2	1.7	-	-	-	-
Music	2	1.7	3	2.6	4	3.4
Communications and writing	2	1.7	2	1.7	4	3.4
Public Relations	1	.9	1	.9	2	1.7
Law	1	.9	1	.9	-	-
Language	1	.9	1	.9	1	.9
Real Estate	-	-	-	-	1	.9
Geneology	-	-	-	-	1	.9
Economics	-	-	-	-	1	.9
Other						
No Answer	6	5.2	26	22.4	47	39.6
Mortuary Science	1	.9	-	-	-	-
Auto Mechanics	-	-	-	-	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0	116	100.0	116	100.0

Table 32

MODE OF INSTRUCTION DESIRED

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Lectures or classes	49	42.2
Short-term conferences, institutes or workshops	28	24.1
On-the-job training, internship	15	12.9
Study on your own, no formal instruction	6	5.2
Travel-study program	5	4.3
Correspondence course	4	3.4
Work on a group action project	2	1.7
Individual lessons from a private teacher	2	1.7
No Answer	1	.9
Other	1	.9
T.V. or video cassettes	0	0
Radio, records, or audio cassettes	0	0
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 33

PLACES OF INSTRUCTION DESIRED

Places	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Four-year college or university	43	37.1
Graduate or professional school	25	21.6
Technical institute, private vocational, trade, or business college	9	7.8
Employer (In-service training)	7	6.0
Community or social organization (such as YMCA)	5	4.3
Correspondence school, home of individual or instructor	5	4.3
Fine or performing arts or crafts studio	4	3.4
Public two-year college	4	3.4
Public high school, day or evening	2	1.7
Recreational or sports group	2	1.7
Business or industrial site (on-the-job training)	2	1.7
Government agency (federal, state or local)	0	0
Library or other cultural institution (such as a museum)	0	0
Other	1	.9
No Answer	4	3.4
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 34

REASONS FOR PREFERRED LOCATION

Reason	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Convenient Location	61	52.9
Available Facilities	29	25.0
Familiarity with the Location	6	5.2
Other	7	6.0
No Answer	13	11.2
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 35

SUMMARY OF PREFERRED CONDITIONS

Conditions	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
I. FREQUENCY OF CLASS MEETINGS		
More than twice a week	24	20.7
About once or twice a week	76	65.5
About once a month	7	6.0
Not at all	2	1.7
Other	4	3.4
No answer	3	2.6
TOTAL	116	100.0
II. HOURS SPENT WEEKLY IN CLASS		
Less than 3 hours	21	18.1
3-10 hours	70	60.3
10-20 hours	12	10.3
20-30 hours	7	6.0
More than 30 hours	4	3.4
No answer	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100.0
III. CONVENIENT TIME TO ATTEND		
Mornings	43	37.1
Noon hour	1	.9
Afternoons	9	7.8
Evenings	41	35.3
Weekends	6	5.2
Anytime	11	9.5
No time is convenient	2	1.7
Other	2	1.7
No answer	1	.9
TOTAL	116	100.0
IV. LENGTH OF TIME TO CONTINUE STUDY		
Less than one week	2	1.7
Between one week and one month	2	1.7
One month to six weeks	28	24.1
Six months to one year	32	27.6
One to two years	23	19.8
More than two years	13	11.2
Continuously	7	6.0
Other	6	5.2
No answer	3	2.6
TOTAL	116	100.0
V. TOTAL COST WILLING TO PAY		
Nothing	1	.9
Less than $10	10	8.6
Between $10-$25	34	29.3
$25-$50	21	18.1
$50-$100	19	16.4
$100-$200	10	8.6
$200 or more	16	13.8
No answer	5	4.3
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 36

QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONS
TO DIRECT LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Qualifications	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Qualifications unimportant	6	5.2
Experienced individual in my area of interest regardless of educational degrees	80	69.0
Individuals holding at least a bachelors degree	7	6.0
Individuals holding at least a masters degree	12	10.3
Individuals with a professional or terminal degree	11	9.5
No answer	0	0
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 37

PRESENCE OF FACTORS OR
REASONS OTHER THAN OWN FREE CHOICE
AFFECTING INTEREST IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Yes	45	38.8
No	65	56.1
Don't Know	4	3.4
No Answer	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 38

REASONS GIVEN BY THE SAMPLE WHICH NEGATIVELY AFFECT INTEREST IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

Reasons	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Cost	15	12.9
Time	11	9.5
Age	2	1.7
Fear of Failure	2	1.7
Race	1	.9
Employment	2	1.7
Other	6	5.2
No Answer	77	66.4
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 39

BARRIERS PREVENTING SAMPLE
FROM CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION

Barriers	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Home responsibilities	51	44.0
Not enough time	43	37.1
Courses I want aren't scheduled when I can attend	31	26.7
Job responsibilities	29	25.0
Cost (including books, tuition, transportation and child care)	26	22.4
Too much red tape in getting enrolled	24	20.7
No child care or inadequate child care	22	19.0
Too much time required to complete program	21	18.1
Afraid that I'm too old to begin	18	15.5
Courses I want don't seem to be available	12	10.3
Don't enjoy studying	12	10.3
Courses are not oriented to my needs and interests	12	10.3
Information and advice about courses are not available	11	9.5
Low grades in the past, probably wouldn't do well	10	8.6
Strict attendance requirements	9	7.8
Not enough energy and stamina	9	7.8
Don't meet requirements to begin program	8	6.9
Tired of going to school, tired of classrooms	6	5.2
No transportation	5	4.3
Friends or family don't like the idea	5	4.3
No place to study or practice	4	3.4
No way to get credit for a degree	1	.9
Other	1	.9
Don't want to seem too ambitious	0	.0

Table 40

PERSONS IN SUPPORT SYSTEM CONSIDERED IMPORTANT IN DECISION MAKING FOR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Persons	Persons important in helping me reach a decision		Persons who gave me encouragement to enroll during last two years		Women who gave me encouragement to enroll during last two years		Persons I have known who applied and/or enrolled in an educational program during last two years		Women I have known who applied and/or enrolled in an educational program during last two years	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Husband	76	65.5	29	25.0	*	*	20	17.2	*	*
Children	29	25.0	11	9.5	34	29.3	35	30.2	26	22.4
Parents	6	5.2	14	12.1	14	12.1	3	2.6	2	1.7
Relatives	*	*	*	*	*	*	37	31.9	26	22.4
Neighbors	*	*	*	*	*	*	36	31.0	25	21.6
Friends	9	7.8	35	30.2	11	9.5	80	69.0	74	63.8
Employer/ co-workers	14	12.1	16	13.8	12	10.3	36	31.0	33	28.4
Teachers/ counselors	15	12.9	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other/ Acquaintances	1	.9	1	.9	55	47.4	34	29.3	26	22.4
Nobody/self only	27	23.3	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

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Table 41

OCCUPATIONS OF THE HUSBANDS OF THE SAMPLE

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Blue-Collar Occupations		
Auto Mechanic	1	.9
Driller	1	.9
Electrician	1	.9
Laborer	6	5.2
Line Crewman	3	2.6
Maintenance	1	.9
Machinist	1	.9
Pipe Inspector	1	.9
Truck Driver	1	.9
Welder	3	2.6
White-Collar Occupations		
Attorney	3	2.6
Auditor	1	.9
Clerical, Sales	16	20.7
Counselor, Psychologist	2	1.7
Draftsman	1	.9
Engineer	3	3.0
Manager, Administrator	22	19.0
Physician, Pharmacist	3	3.0
Teacher, Educator	8	6.9
Other		
Service Worker, Student Retired etc.	6	5.2
*No Answer	32	27.6
TOTAL	116	100.0

*Approximately 19% of the sample were single, widowed, separated, or divorced.

Table 42

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF HUSBANDS
OF THE SAMPLE

Educational Attainment	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
0-8 Years	5	4.3
9-12 Years	11	9.5
High School or GED	8	6.9
Vocational Technical	0	0
Some College	14	12.1
Two Year College Degree	2	1.7
Bachelors Degree	14	12.1
Some Graudate or Professional Study	8	6.9
Masters Degree	16	13.8
*No Answer	38	32.8
TOTAL	116	100.0

*Approximately 19% of the sample were single, widowed, separated or divorced.

Table 43

REACTIONS OF PERSON IN SUPPORT SYSTEM TO DESIRES OF SAMPLE TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Person and Reactions	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
HUSBANDS		
Encourage	67	57.8
Discourage	5	4.3
Do Nothing	16	13.8
No Answer	28	24.1
TOTAL	116	100.0
CHILDREN		
Encourage	43	37.1
Discourage	6	5.2
Do Nothing	22	19.0
No Answer	45	38.8
TOTAL	116	100.0
PARENTS		
Encourage	52	44.8
Discourage	4	3.4
Do Nothing	26	22.4
No Answer	34	29.3
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 43 continued

Person	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
FRIENDS		
Encourage	82	70.7
Discourage	0	0
Do Nothing	16	13.8
No Answer	18	15.5
TOTAL	116	100.0
EMPLOYER		
Encourage	38	32.8
Discourage	0	0
Do Nothing	14	12.1
No Answer	64	55.2
TOTAL	116	100.0
CO-WORKERS		
Encourage	39	33.6
Discourage	1	.9
Do Nothing	15	12.9
No Answer	61	52.6
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table 44

ACTIONS RELATED TO EDUCATION TAKEN BY THE SAMPLE WITHIN THE LAST YEAR

Actions	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (Percent)
Discussed Education	66	56.9
Asked for information about education from acquaintances	47	40.5
Wrote or telephoned a place with educational information for own educational purposes	31	26.7
Visited a place that has educational programs to get information for own purposes	33	28.4
Read materials about educational programs for own educational purposes	56	48.3
Spoke with a representative of an educational program about own educational plans	17	14.7
Took College-level Entrance Examination	3	2.6
Applied to an educational program	9	7.8
Admitted to an educational program	11	9.5

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ABSTRACT

Title: Formal Education at a Standstill: Women's Views

Authors: Otis Holloway Owens and Marilyn Emplaincourt

Institute of Higher Education Research and Services
The University of Alabama

This study is concerned with the educational attitudes, experiences, needs, and constraints of a selected sample of women in the Tuscaloosa area who were not enrolled in educational programs during the Spring of 1975. Commissioned by Dr. David Mathews, President of The University of Alabama, this study was conducted by the Institute of Higher Education Research and Services. It was initiated in May 1975 and the final results were compiled in the Summer 1976. One hundred and sixteen (116) women participated in the study by the completion of a sixty-four item questionnaire.

The majority of the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward former informal and formal educational experiences. Furthermore, they expressed a desire for continuing their education if special arrangements could be made. Most of those interviewed would consider enrolling in courses or areas of study because of personal interest and enjoyment, although they were also interested in earning credit toward a degree or certificate. Education was the most frequently indicated area of interest. The major barrier in attaining more education was home responsibilities. Other barriers included lack of time, inconvenient scheduling

ABSTRACT
Continued

of classes, job responsibilities, cost, enrollment red tape, and inadequate or no child care.

Recommendations coupled with the data may provide valuable information to the educational planner dedicated to reaching and serving a new clientele.